A GLANCE AT THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCHES IN THE DEANERY OF SPARKHAM, IN NORFOLK.—NO. VI.

WITH NOTICES OF THEIR ACTUAL CONDITION.

(*Continued from p.* 516.)

Belaugh.—In a spot of how picturesque seclusion repose here, each one in his permanent abiding place, the forefathers of the hamlet! A tangled copse fills the small ravine on your left; in front the cemetery is nearly washed by an angle of the Wensum; behind, waving hay and corn robe the hill-side to its ridge, and far away to the right—although here perhaps the want of hedge-rows somewhat impairs the scenic effect—the mazy river flows through open pastures, which rise in the distance to where the fine church of Swanton Morley, with its embowering trees, closes the prospect. Reader, has the tomb never come over thy musings in wilder guise? Then hast thou not, like ourselves, a kinsman taking his latest sleep where the giant palms wave their green crests over him on the banks of the Camaroons; never, as we, assisted to consign a poor sea-boy to his ocean-grave, after nightfall, in the latitude of the "still-vexed Bermoothes." Far different the homestead of the departed environing the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin at Belaugh.

Would that we could write of it, in the words of the poet Mason—

"No modern art
Had marred with misplaced symmetry the pile."

On entering, our attention was drawn at once to a mural tablet over the tower-arch, on which we read:—"A.D. 1809-10. The chancel of this church rebuilt; the north and south transepts added; the tower, buttresses, windows, roof, and battlements substantially built and repaired; and the interior of the church handsomely fitted up at the sole expense of Sir John Lombe, *Baronet*, patron."* We shall not quarrel with an old gentleman of fourscore for inclining to break Priscian's head in this chronicle of his munificence: let us rather pass on to examine how far it was guided by a correct taste and Catholic principles.

And giving the restored church a cruciform character will hardly be deemed exceptionable, though for ourselves we would decidedly have preserved its original ground-plan. Modern builders are only too fond of resorting to this "apt and appropriate figure;" often, perhaps, in order to conceal the poverty of their resources, whether pecuniary or artistic. Transepts form a poor substitute for the well-developed chancel and nave, with or without aisles, of days when men without stint of means thought *most of all* on what was best adapted to the services and requirements of God's household. Those sitting in the "cross aisles" for the most part lose sight of the priest in his ministration at the Holy Table; but this is held light of by a generation that exclaims loudly against high-altars, and erects the scandal of high pulpits instead. We confess, however, that the transepts are in our view more bearable than is the vulgar plastering on the projecting turrets raised from the groundsel at each of their four external angles.

The roof of this church is slated at a low pitch, and at the time of its restoration was supplied with copper eaves-gutters, which have since been stolen. Three lofty windows, of as many lights respectively, are each of them charged in the central one with the Lombe escutcheon in painted glass; the mullions, simply crossing in the head without foliations: two fire-places have been supplied beneath the windows of the transepts, to which the turrets just mentioned are made to serve as chimneys.

A thought struck us during the survey, that we were inspecting the work of a Vitruvius whose exploits will find notice in their proper sphere, and inquiry proved that the conjecture was a correct one. But some fine antiques within the church shall first have our regard. And in the central avenue between the transepts on a large slab of grey marble, the portraiture of a knight in complete armour, and his lady—their hands clasped in prayer—are graven on separate brasses, with an inscription: "Pray for the soule of John Curson, knight, and the lady Jane, his wife." The first died, we are informed, on the feast of St. Fabian, 1471, and by his will, dated ten days previous, requires to be buried in the church of Belaugh, at the chancel-door under the rood-loft, and to have a grave-stone of eight marks' price. The female's head-gear, her caul ornamented with two projections like butterfly's wings, bespeaks the reign of Edward IV.

A word also on the tower and the font. The first is circular in its lower portion, but forms above a *quasi* belvidere, which is octagonal and has a battlemented parapet, the bell-chamber being pierced with no less than eight large windows, although the alternate ones are now blocked. They are of perpendicular character, and evidently of later erection than the base part: a ladder supplies the want of staircase here, but we found it much lumbered with coals and other accumulations. The font, an octagon of moderate size, has the panels of its bowl charged with shields; the stem and circular base are recent and—we had almost said as a necessary consequence—mean. But we are yet suffered to rejoice over splendid, though comparatively rare exceptions.

On the north side of the chancel we find a mural tablet by Bacon, erected to the memory of the late Sir John Lombe, who died in 1807: it represents the east end of a Gothic church, with turrets at the angles, the altar window of course forming a chief feature. Generally speaking, our monuments savour altogether too much of worldliness. We had infinitely preferred seeing the baronet of the nineteenth century his simple effigies in like posture with the knight's of the fifteenth—both thus confessing, as it were, that "Man can carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him." The dead, as they are released from the cares, so they no longer need the insigns of life. In the grave the chancellor requires no woolsack, the orator no tribunal, the general no soldiers, the admiral no shipping; all they have to do with—the last great Audit. "The semblances of the departed should seem either as men worshipping, or men that have 'fallen asleep.'"* Some may ask, when then may the *Statuary* hope for patronage? He has secular places in all their diversity—the palace, the house of parliament, the guild-chamber, the private mansion, the park, the square—to range over and adorn with the highest efforts of his art, without infringing on the sanctuary, the vestibule of another existence. The advantages of our present state of things would have been dearly purchased at *one* solemn lesson of a different kind, and they have cost us a thousand. Taking matters as they are, however, Sir John Lombe's monument contrasts well with the heathen sarcophagus, *inane ponclus*, which disfigures an inclosed grave in the churchyard.

We had gladly been spared the duty of further comment on the interior of this fabric, but the influence of evil example must, if possible, be arrested. The tokens of exclusiveness may not be so invidious and glaring as they are too often met with elsewhere; beyond this remains small scope for approval. The coved ceilings, relieved in the dome with *flat groinings*, which are continued down the chamfered angles of the lantern in shallow pilasters, were better seen, and we hope also appreciated, in a conventicle. A low wainscotting within the altar-rails, formed of Norman arches, already exhibits symptoms of decay: much good oak has been ill expended on the unsightly dossel or altar-screen, on the huge pulpit, desks, and pews. Every thing betrays the designer's utter ignorance of what constitutes correct taste and ecclesiastical propriety.

Seem we to assume authority to ourselves in these strictures? *that* be far from us; but "before the mischief of past years can be remedied, the whole extent of the evil must be detailed."

PROFITS OF TIMBER ON ESTATES.—The late Mr. Fleming, of Hampshire, was one of the largest landed proprietors in the county, owning at his death 15,000 acres, so richly wooded, that he is supposed to have cut 500,000*l.* worth of timber, from first to last, and yet left the whole as full as the land will bear. Mr. Fleming's expenditure in the town and neighbourhood of Southampton averaged 18,000*l.* a year, and immediately after his departure for the Mediterranean the loss of such a large expenditure was most sensibly felt. —*Hants Advertiser.*

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION IN BUILDINGS.

THE cause of the recent fire at New Cross has been traced to the spontaneous ignition of some vegetable black which was stowed in the paint-room. A few weeks back, we drew attention to a similar catastrophe, which originated in the accumulation of pigeons' dung in the great tower of the Church of Pisa, and not long since we remember reading in one of the philosophical journals a statement that oil-paintings on canvas have been known, under certain circumstances, to generate heat sufficient to produce a flame. Having these facts before him, Mr. Booth, the lecturer on chemistry, has, in a most praiseworthy spirit, drawn public attention to the subject, and calls for a full and searching inquiry into the phenomena under consideration. He says, that "in the incipient decomposition which precedes ignition, gaseous compounds readily ignitable are formed, generating a highly-combustible atmosphere, so that when heat sufficient to generate flame is produced this will at once act along the whole surface of the area, producing, as with the fire-damp, a simultaneous blaze." A full investigation of the subject, conducted by the first chemists of the day, would of necessity lead to most useful results, and surely the fire insurance companies would soon find their account in originating the inquiry and defraying every expense attending it.

CHURCH-BUILDING INTELLIGENCE, &c.

Consecration of Christ Church, Clifton Park.—On Tuesday last the Lord Bishop of Bristol consecrated the new church at Clifton-park. The situation chosen for the church is exceedingly beautiful, and, according to present appearances, will be the centre of numerous terraces, squares, and other dwellings for the more opulent class of society. The building itself, by its pretensions to a better style of architecture than has usually prevailed in our sacred edifices of modern construction, seems to invite criticism. We take the following from our contemporary, the *Bristol Gazette*:—"Christ Church is designed in the early English style of architecture, or in that style of architecture which prevailed in England between the years 1200 and 1250, as exemplified by parts of the cathedrals at York, Salisbury, Peterborough, Carlisle, and Durham. The church comprises a nave, 104 feet long by 36 feet wide, with an apsidal chancel 27 feet deep, and a north and south transept. The total interior dimensions of the church are 131 feet from east to west, by 36 feet from north to south across the nave, and 78 feet including the transepts; the height from the aisles to the ceiling is 50 feet, and from the plinth to the ridge of the roof, 64 feet. The chancel is ascended by five steps, and is separated from the nave by an arch 44 feet high. The transepts are also divided from the nave by arches 34 feet high; the characteristic features of the style, with disengaged columns and deeply-recessed mouldings, being carried out to the greatest extent that the funds at the disposal of the committee would permit. Sittings are provided for upwards of 1,000 persons, including 347 open sittings. The mason's work was begun by the 1st of Feb. 1843, and the walls were ready to receive the roof in the month of September following; and the building was completed, fit for consecration, in about eighteen months from the commencement of the works, notwithstanding the loss and inconvenience to which the committee was subjected by the bankruptcy of the contractor for the mason's work. The architect who superintended the whole is Mr. Charles Dyer, of Park-street; and the contractors for the principal works were Messrs. G. Strawbridge, G. Monk and Son, W. Edkins and Son, J. Fowler and Son, Williams and Gay, T. Allen, and H. B. Osborne."—*Farley's Bristol Journal.*

Re-Consecration of Codford St. Mary Church.—On Wednesday, Oct. 2, the church of Codford St. Mary was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury. This church has been nearly rebuilt. The old tower and a small portion of the south wall appear to be all that belonged to the original structure externally. The south wall having fallen in the course of 1843, whilst the rubbish was removing from around the foundations, it was resolved to build an additional aisle. In carrying out this

* Well were all this exchanged for the simple exclamation—"Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have rebuilt!"

* Armstrong's Paper on Monuments.